

# Brain Scans Reveal How Poverty Hurts Children's Brains

Growing up poor can mean differences in gray matter—and lower test scores

Photo and article courtesy of [Bloomberg](#)  
John Tozzi, July 20, 2015

Growing up poor has long been linked to lower academic test scores. And there's now mounting evidence that it's partly because kids can suffer real physical consequences from low family incomes, including brains that are less equipped to learn.

An analysis of hundreds of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) brain scans found that children from poor households had smaller amounts of gray matter in areas of the brain responsible for functions needed for learning, according to a new [study](#) published on Monday in *JAMA Pediatrics*. The anatomical difference could explain as much as 20 percent of the gap in test scores between kids growing up in poverty and their more affluent peers, according to the research.

The study adds to our understanding of the [link](#) between income and achievement.

It's well-established that, on average, poor children lag in school performance. But scientists are just beginning to unravel precisely how wealth affects learning.

Children in households below the [federal poverty level](#)—an annual income of about \$24,000 for a family of four—had gray matter volumes 7 percent to 10 percent lower than what would be expected for normal development. About [20 percent](#) of American children lived at this income level in 2013, according to Census data. Smaller gaps were evident for households considered "near poor," making up to 150 percent of the poverty level, currently about \$36,000 for a family of four.

Kids living just above the "near poor" level looked statistically similar to children from much wealthier families.

Read full article at <http://goo.gl/m4Rp4G>



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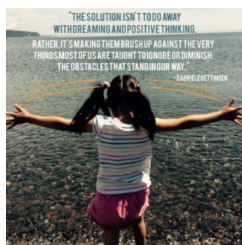


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## WHY GROUNDING DREAM IN OBSTACLES HELPS YOUNG PEOPLE MANIFEST THEM

Posted by Erin Walsh / July 16



I grew up in a culture saturated with messages about positive thinking. Posters with "Believe it! Achieve it!" or "Reach for the Stars" plastered the walls of my elementary school. It certainly seems reasonable that encouraging young people to dream would excite them, motivate them, and propel them towards a more positive future.

**But recently we've learned there are critical nuances to how we wield the power of positivity.**

It turns out that conventional wisdom – that fantasizing about success makes us successful – is not born out by the research.

Continue reading at <http://drdavewalsh.com/posts/211>

## WANT TO USE MEDIA CREATIVELY WITH YOUR KIDS? THESE ARE 5 FUN WAYS.

Posted by Erin Walsh / July 15



We've written regularly about the importance of screen-free play and setting screen time limits. But there is less guidance for parents about how to use technology to enhance child development. We have to continue to push open the space between "lock down" and "hands off" and share strategies and activities that help our kids learn how to unleash the transformative power of technology.

So in that spirit - here are 5 quick activities to do with your little ones when tech gets turned on.

Continue reading at <http://drdavewalsh.com/posts/tips/210>

Photo and article courtesy of [Dr. Dave Mind Positive Parenting](#)

## BACK TO SCHOOL: WHY AUGUST IS THE NEW SEPTEMBER

Posted by Daphne Sasin, CNN  
August 2015



- An earlier start date gives teachers more instructional time before statewide assessment tests in the spring. Several experts agreed that this is one of the biggest factors pushing calendars back.
- Beginning in August allows students to complete the first semester before the December holiday break, rather than taking tests and turning in big projects after two weeks off. Teachers don't have to spend time reviewing material in January when they should be starting new lessons.
- Starting early allows for a fall break in September or October and a winter break around February, in addition to breaks around Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Teachers are happier and kids behave better when they have more breaks throughout the year, said Rebecca Kaye, the Atlanta Public .
- A lot of kids simply didn't show up after Memorial Day.
- Many graduating students and staff members take summer courses at colleges and universities.

Continue reading at <http://goo.gl/KGWjzQ>

## BOUNCING OFF THE WALLS: ARE ENERGY AND COFFEE DRINKS OVER-CAFFEINATING OUR KIDS?

*Posted by Erin Anne Blankebiller, June 30.  
Lincoln Journal Star*



Today, things have changed with new specialty coffee drinks, energy drinks and sodas that all contain various amounts of caffeine, and they can do more than just stunt a child's growth.

Dr. Wade Fornander is board-certified in family medicine and practices at Prairie Lake Family Medicine. He says that caffeine can cause increased blood pressure and reduced heart rate in teenagers and tweens. Because it is a stimulant, caffeine can negatively affect sleep, reducing the deep and restorative sleep children need for optimal development. Fornander says this can occur even with small amounts of caffeine.

"The more caffeine a child ingests the less restorative sleep they will get," Fornander said. "Lack of sleep affects school performance and leads to behavioral problems." In large amounts, caffeine may cause a fast heartbeat, dizziness, diarrhea, elevated blood sugar, irritability, nausea and even confusion or seizures.

Continue reading at <http://goo.gl/Btqd1H>

## HOW SEL CAN HELP STUDENTS GAIN A MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

*Posted by edutopia, May 2015*



Carlos Cortés, a professor of history at UC Riverside in California, maintains that it is the job of schools in a pluralistic democracy to help all students become what he calls "multicultural persons."

He outlines this as a person who can:

1. Understand the importance and operation of groups.
2. Acquire an understanding of various cultures and worldviews.
3. Recognize and understand others' perspectives before forming judgments about them.
4. Realize the contributions of individual groups and diverse groups --*pluribus* and *num* -- to our nation's history and future experiences.
5. See how shared goals benefit from the contributions of diverse groups, each with its own history and future.
6. Participate in the mass media as thoughtful, critical consumers and contributors.
7. Develop a deep and lasting civic commitment and a concern for others as well as him- or herself.

Continue reading at <http://goo.gl/6LEAz4>

## Don't let class tech be just a garnish.

*Posted by Cheryl Mizerny, Middleweb, May 2015 (about middle school)*



All too often, I see teachers get excited about a new, fun app or device and immediately start to think about how they can incorporate it into their classroom.

They are more concerned with the trimmings than the entrée.

Teachers need to determine what is to be taught before they decide what technology to use. The task at hand should influence the choice of technology and not vice-versa.

It's been said before, but it bears repeating, that technology, whether in the form of a device or an application, is but a tool in our teaching toolbox. It needs to be an integral and vital part of the lesson, and must truly improve the instruction.

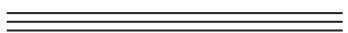
You want students to be able to answer the question, "What are you learning?" and not, "What are you playing with?"

### New fangled drill-and-kill

Another issue is that a great deal of the incorporation of technology occurs at the most superficial level and only serves to replace current practice rather than improve upon it. Teachers should be focusing on what students can do with the addition of technology that they could not do without it before. Too many apps are just animated drill-and-kill exercises.

Continue reading at <http://www.middleweb.com/22605/is-your-tech-integration-mostly-a-garnish/>

## Scholarship and Grant Connection



WWW.EDUCATION.NE.GOV/MCE



### Gates Millennium

**Open: August 1, 2015**  
**Deadline: January 13, 2016**

African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American/Pacific Islander or Hispanic American. Citizen or legal permanent resident; GPA 3.3 or GED.

<http://www.gmsp.org/> for forms and additional criteria

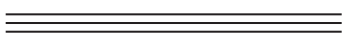
### State Farm Foundation: Grants

**Deadline: October 31, 2015**

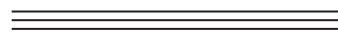
We make it our business to be like a good neighbor, helping to build safer, stronger and better educated communities across the United States. Through our company grants, we focus on two areas: safety and education.

<https://goo.gl/1miiLe>

## Educational Resources Connection



WWW.EDUCATION.NE.GOV/MCE



**Museum of Nebraska Art presents *Native American Presence on the Missouri* open Kearney NE.**

***Native American Presence on the Missouri* August 18 – November 1, 2015.** On loan from the collection of Eva and George Neubert and courtesy of Flatwater Folk Art Museum, the exhibition's 38 works illustrate the presence of Native Americans along the Missouri River in the mid to late 19th century. Etchings, steel engravings, lithographs, and

woodblocks by Karl Bodmer, George Catlin, and William De La Montagne Cary, among other artists, are included along with various illustrations from newspaper publications and photographs by Frank Rinehart, the official photographer of the Indian Congress in Omaha at the 1898 Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition. For more information contact the Museum at (308) 865-8559.

[Across the Creek](http://www.sundance.org/artistservices) is making its digital premiere through the Sundance Institute Artist Services program ([www.sundance.org/artistservices](http://www.sundance.org/artistservices)), which provides

Institute-supported artists with exclusive opportunities for creative self-distribution, marketing and financing solutions for their work.



The Sundance Institute Artist Services program is supported by Cinereach, Kickstarter, national Endowment for the Arts, Vimeo, the John S. and James L. Knight

Foundation, and Arcus Foundation. For more information about Across the Creek, visit [www.acrossthecreekfilm.com](http://www.acrossthecreekfilm.com) or [www.pbs.org/program/across-creek/](http://www.pbs.org/program/across-creek/)

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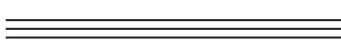
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Visit [freetech4teachers.com](http://freetech4teachers.com) for 47 alternatives to YouTube.



## Workshops, Webinars, Conference Connection



WWW.EDUCATION.NE.GOV/MCE



### Closing the Achievement Gap in Rural Nebraska Districts

**Webinar: August 27, 2015**

This webinar will provide participants with research and information related to instructional and organizational practices in rural districts that have closed the achievement gap. Shelley Billig from REL Central at Marzano Research will introduce the topic and describe the work of the Rural Education Research Alliance. Patricia L. Hardré from the University of Oklahoma will summarize her work on motivating rural students to succeed in learning and development. Cheryl Malcolm and Richard Alt, both superintendents in Nebraska, will provide overviews of their districts and factors in the areas of teaching and learning, district leadership, and organization and structure and processes that may have contributed to gap closure in their districts.

Regional Educational Laboratory

Register online at  
<https://goo.gl/INJ8oY>

2:00-3:00 p.m. Central Time

### Coaching to Assist Teachers of Students Struggling in Mathematics

**Webinar: October 17, 2015**

- Learn about intervention instruction in elementary and secondary mathematics
- Find out which commonly-used content and instructional practices actually interfere with mathematics learning and are counterproductive to student success
- Explore ways to monitor student progress, specifically in middle school algebra

This webinar is designed for any educators interested in helping elementary or secondary students who are struggling to learn mathematics. School-, district-, and state-level personnel are all welcome to attend. If you are interested but cannot attend the live event, you can still register at the link below and be notified when a recording of the webinar will be available online.

Register online <https://goo.gl/ZTdqJW>

McRel Sponsored

### NIEA 2015

**October 14-17, 2015**

Building Education Nations through Traditional Foundations  
 Pre-convention courses begin October 14.. Visit their website for information.

Portland OR

<http://www.niea.org/>

**Equity Update 2015****October 15-16, 2015**

The update is free of charge to all public school educators in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska, but space is limited. This year the Update will address the topics of social justice, student achievement, and information on teen gender violence from Jana's Campaign which you can check out [here](#). The event also allows networking between participants and connects attendees with other regional technical assistance providers. Check our website for registration information - coming soon! For more information email us at [meac@ksu.edu](mailto:meac@ksu.edu).

Midwest Equity Center  
Kansas City MO

For more information email us at  
[meac@ksu.edu](mailto:meac@ksu.edu).

**2015 Annual Hispanic/Latino Summit****October 27, 2015**

Opportunities for secondary students and educators to learn about the importance of graduating college and being career ready. The 2015 Summit provides opportunities for secondary students and staff to learn about the importance of graduating college and career ready and highlights resources available to support student success. We are encouraging youth attendance by providing informational sessions on opportunities for post-secondary experiences.

Younes Conference Center  
Kearney NE

[Www.lationsummit.org](http://www.lationsummit.org)

Gallery of Stars nomination are open.

**Formative Assessment Research and Implications****November 2, 2015**

Focused on learning about formative assessment research and discussing implementation and teacher support for using formative assessment in the classroom. The event will include presentations on formative assessment research in the morning and small-group, break-out discussion sessions in the afternoon.

- See how teachers can use formative assessment to improve student achievement
  - Discuss how to implement formative assessment and support teachers in the use of formative assessment in the classroom
- Debate the relevance of rigorous research to classroom teaching

ESU 3—LaVista, NE

Space is very limited

Register at <https://goo.gl/NANhzH>

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**A Dream Deferred: The Future of African American Education****March 7-8, 2016**

Attendees will discuss new solutions, share best practices, and collaborate with colleagues to make a difference for African American students.

Sheraton & LeMeridien Charlotte Hotel, Charlotte, N.C.

<https://dreamdeferred.collegeboard.org/>

**Prepare: Educating Latinos for the Future of America****April 18-19, 2016**

Participants will convene to discuss strategies to increase the preparation, access, and college completion of the fastest-growing student population in our public schools.

New York, NY

<https://prepare.collegeboard.org/>

**Native American Student Advocacy Institute****June 6-7, 2016**

One Vision conference to discuss new solutions, share best practices, and collaborate with colleagues to make a difference in the lives of American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian students.

Arizona State University  
Tempe, AZ  
Information coming



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